



Preventing adolescent uptake of alcohol & drugs: Adolescent violence in the home

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Agenda


- What is adolescent violence in the home – definition, frequency & prevalence
- Exploring the intersect between substance youth and adolescent violence in the home
- Exploring assessment and treatment



Questioning the problem...

Case scenario 1

- Justin is 15 years old and lives with his mother and 9 year old sister. He is referred by the school for smoking, binge drinking and aggression to other students. His mother gives him money for cigarettes and occasionally buys him alcohol.




Justin has severely damaged the family home. He threatens his mother for money and has held her against the wall. He regularly punches his sister. She has started self harming.



Case study 2

- Carrie's (16 years) mother has kicked her out of home because she is using drugs, mainly cannabis. She says she only smokes occasionally with friends. Carrie tells you there is constant conflict because her mother is too strict.


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- Last weekend Carrie smashed her bedroom windows and punched her mother in the face. This violence was precipitated by Carrie's mother coming home from work and finding Carrie smoking bong with 3 friends and asking them to leave.



Case study 3

- Paul (aged 14) is not attending school. He is depressed and can't sleep. He has been binge drinking and destroyed a neighbor's garden.

His mother left Paul's dad two years ago. Paul sees his father at weekends and says he wants to live with him despite a court order to the contrary.

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- Paul's father was violent to Paul and his mother. Paul is verbally abusive to his mother and has kicked and punched her. She has to lock her bedroom because Paul steals her money to buy alcohol.



Definition


- Frequent abusive and violent acts by an adolescent that create fear in, and are intended to hurt parents or family members.
- Commonly parents adjust their own behavior to accommodate threats or anticipation of violence (Paterson et al, 2002)
- Abuse and violence is frequently directed against siblings



Behaviours

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Financial
- Verbal - threats


Often threats & extortion for money for drugs & alcohol



Vic Pol Statistics – 2009/2010

Adolescent (U18Yrs) Family Violence Perpetrators

- Statewide – 2,831 F/V incidents where adolescent was the perpetrator = 8% of all F/V incidents
- 422 Intervention Orders sought by police
- 1/3 Female Perpetrators, 2/3 Male perpetrator
- Most between 15-17 years
- Female adolescent violence rates are rising
- Highest incidence in growth corridors

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- Mothers are more likely to experience violence from their adolescent than fathers
 - The most significant 'at risk' cohort are sole mothers of adolescent sons, where the mothers have left a violent partner.
 - A Western Sydney study (2007) of 127 women found 51% reported violence from their children. Most was by adolescent sons against sole mothers.
 - The incidence of male violence increased by 24%, and for female violence perpetrators almost 39% (2006/7)

Co-occurring issues

- 66% of adolescents who use violence in the home also use substances (Haw, 2009)
- 60-70% of adolescents who use violence in the home have substance issues (Kennair & Miller, 2007)
- Alcohol – reduced self control, increased emotional lability and impulsivity
- Experiencing violence can lead to substance use as a means of self medicating
- Problematic alcohol use is a key risk factor for family violence
- Males more likely than females to be both perpetrators and victims of alcohol related violence (except family violence)



Limits to current knowledge

- Parents often minimize or deny the violence. They feel ashamed, guilty and embarrassed. This reinforces the assumption the problem is rare
- Service providers may not assess for violence, see it as inconsequential and pathologise parents or the adolescent (or both)



Determinants

No one determinant – there are many and they are interrelated.

The violence may seem to ‘come out of nowhere’ and/or may dissipate for no particular reason.



Family Violence

- 60-95% of adolescent who use violence in the home have experienced family violence
- Impact of trauma on child's developing brain – anxiety, hard to trust, frustration and intolerance, stress, hyper vigilance, impulsivity, lack capacity for emotional regulation
- Impact of violence on the mother – physical, mental health, emotional
- Father undermines mother/child bond and attachment
- Father undermines mother's ability to parent and hold parental authority
- Father as role model and is often idealized



Parenting

- **Inconsistent**, permissive with minimal boundary setting
- **Conflicted** where permissive parent (often father) undermines firm parent/ 'splitting'
- **Indulgent** which is risk adverse and 'saves' the adolescent from challenges
- **Authoritarian**, controlling or abusive parenting

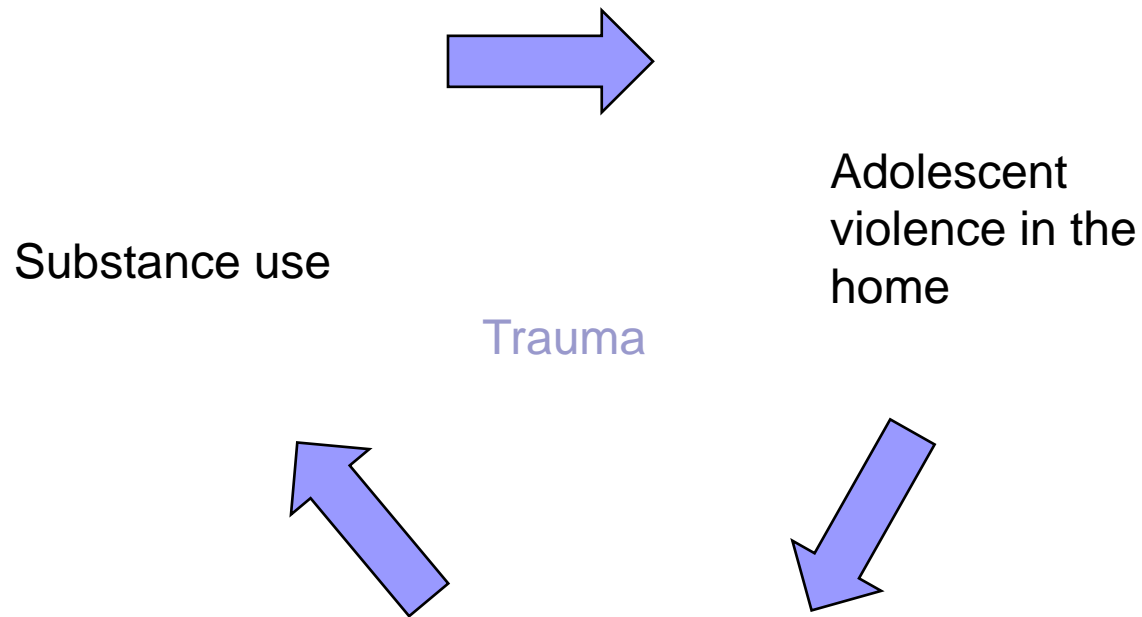



Substance use precipitates the use of violence

Violence precipitates the use of substances

Substance use increases the severity of the violence

Dual diagnosis





How can a youth diversionary response engage adolescents and mitigate the use of substances?



Youth diversion in Step Up, Seattle

- Similar to drug courts
- Police called to family violence incident
- Youth are diverted to behavioural change programs
- Parents must also participate
- 2 components – 20 week group program plus care coordination
- Average age – 14/15 years – early intervention



Assessment & treatment

- Safety – adolescent's and the family members'
- Accountability and responsibility for the use of violence
- Empathy and 'making amends'
- Respect
- Non violent problem solving

Assessment

Assessment includes:

- adolescent's use of violence (types, frequency, severity etc)
- social, mental health, substance abuse and family history
- parenting and discipline styles
- current and past adult family violence
- safety of family members and parental level of fear
- school – attendance, issues, challenges, support needs
- community involvement – social and community connection
- need for other services such as mental health evaluation.



Treatment

Key treatment goals with **adolescents** include:

- taking responsibility for behaviour and being accountable for the effects of their violence and substance use on others
- demonstrating empathy for those they have abused
- deciding on and implementing actions to ‘make amends’ for their use of violence
- learning skills such as non violent conflict resolution, ‘time out’ techniques delayed gratification and assertive communication
- addressing other issues eg mental health
- engagement in work, training or school.



Treatment

Key treatment goals with **parents** include:

- exploring family history, particularly adult family violence and substance use and impact on their child and their parenting
- ‘making amends’ for abusive, harsh or violent parenting
- learning new skills such as boundary setting, use of consequences, ‘time out’, communication, conflict resolution
- Psycho-education about parenting, substance use and child development, particularly the adolescent years
- addressing issues that may negatively impact on parenting
- restoration of family relationships (where it is safe to do so).




Outcomes

- Recidivism rates of 5-9%
- Re-engagement in education and training
- Greater resilience to resist peer pressure
- Improved family relationships
(parent/parent, parent/child, child/child)
- Improved parenting



What workers can do:

1. Assess for adolescent violence in the home:
 - When you argue with your mum do you ever swear at her, push her, hit her?
 - Do you think the things you say or the ways you behave gets in the way of having a good relationship with her?
 - Are your parents frightened of you? How does that affect the way they relate to you?
 - If your mum was here would she say she feels safe when you argue? Would she say she can freely express her opinions?
 - What did you do after your dad said you couldn't borrow any more money? What happened next?
 - How do you respond when your little sister constantly annoys you?



Consider violence and substance use as relational issues

- Adolescents may be vulnerable and 'at risk'. They may be victims of violence themselves. But they can still take responsibility for, and be accountable for their use of violence
- Not assessing for violence in the home neglects a powerful domain for intervention and family reparation
- Seek the young person's permission for family members to talk with you
- Interview each family member separately, including mother and father (to assess for adult family violence and substance use)



What workers can do

- Educate parents about the link between violence in the home and substance uptake
- Emphasize the importance of family members' safety (including the adolescent's)
- Seek to understand their use of violence but always hold the line violence is not acceptable



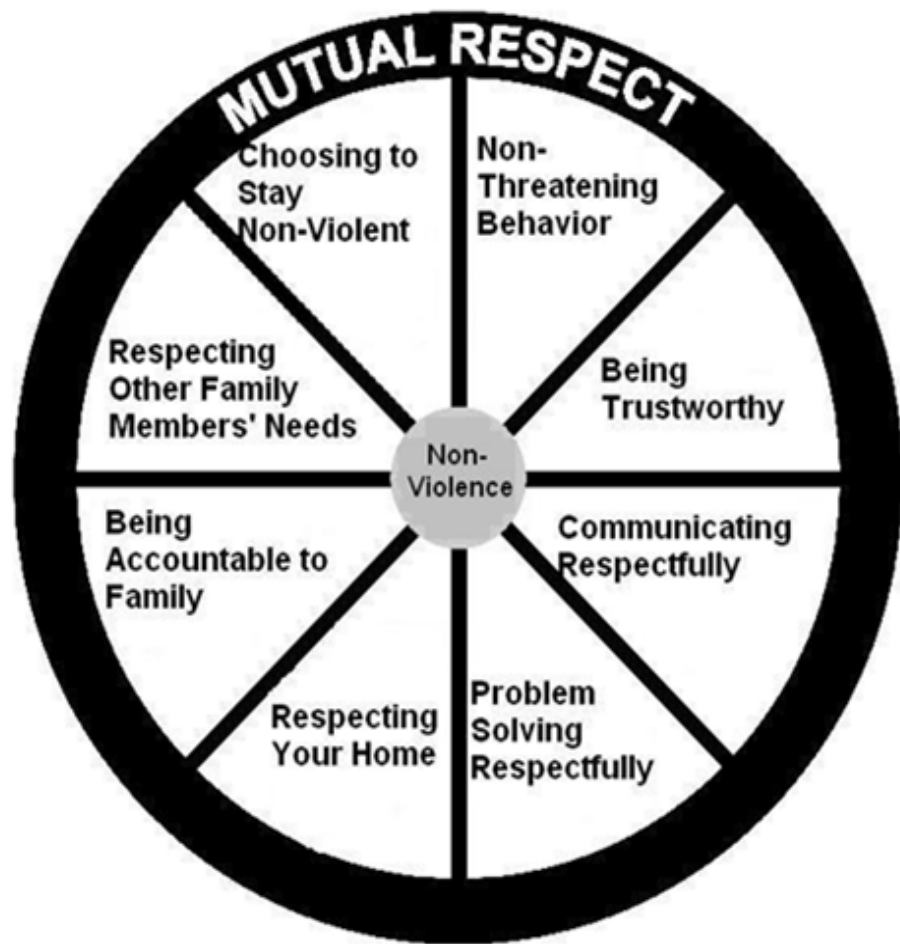
What workers can do

- Explore what difference it would make if the violence and abuse/substance use was not present. What would need to happen for them to stop their use of violence?
- Explore changes parents can make to increase safety and rebuild the relationship
- Explore changes the adolescent can make to increase safety and rebuild the relationship

What behaviors did you use during the past week?



Step Up Program, (206) 296-7941
Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project



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The goal is to move to using the Mutual Respect Wheel

Check-In Slide



Conclusion

- Substance use and violence frequently co-occur
- Addressing violence in the home is an integral component in addressing and preventing substance use